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Search for New Law Dean Begins Again

Laurie Goldberg
Indiana Daily Student

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Maurer School of Law
Bloomington

Search for new law dean begins again

'Exhausted' panel re-forms, gets ready for year of work

By Laurie Goldberg

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Indiana Daily Student

Sometimes it's best to throw up your hands and begin again.

That's what the IU-Bloomington School of Law is doing in its search for a new dean.

IU-Bloomington Vice President Kenneth Gros Louis has created a new search-and-screen committee to find a dean, continuing the work of a committee formed two years ago.

"The work of the original committee was exhausted," said Bryant Garth, professor of law and committee member. "It's time for another search."

And William Hicks, professor of law and chairman of both the original and new search committees, said it could be more than a year until the law school gets a permanent dean.

The first committee was formed to find a replacement for Sheldon Plager, who resigned as

dean in 1984 to devote more time to teaching law at IU.

The committee chose Morris Arnold, who took over as dean in the fall but left in December to accept a federal judgeship. Arnold's resignation put the search committee back in action, using the list of nominees the committee had chosen Arnold from.

The committee had nominated William Powers, professor of law at the University of Texas-Austin, but Powers declined.

The newly formed committee will start another nationwide search for a law school dean. The search also will look at candidates previously in the running, Hicks said.

"It would be great if we could find a dean by September," he said. "But realistically we are looking at the prospect of (not) having a new dean (until) the University fiscal year which would be July 1."

Hicks cited some reasons why the law school has

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had difficulty finding nominees.

"A candidate might have two income earners in his family and they each have employment interests that need to be satisfied in Bloomington, which is hard," he said. "(Also) there's not a long line of people waiting to become dean. It's not what everyone aspires to do."

Maurice Holland, acting dean and professor of law, said the job of dean is not as attractive as it once was.

"It takes more of an inducement to persuade professors to give up the satisfaction of being a law professor" to take on the greater responsibilities of a deanship, he said.

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Holland is leaving IU in July to become dean of the University of Oregon School of Law.

When he leaves, Gros Louis will select an interim acting dean until a new dean is found, Holland said.

Although the new committee is starting fresh, it has retained most of its previous members.

Some students are graduating and faculty members could be on leave, but there was not a large change in the committee's make up, Garth said.

"The former committee was operating under serious limitations," Hicks said, referring to the group's late start in trying to find a new dean by the time Holland leaves.

Although the past two years have seen major changes in administration, Holland said the school has not suffered.

"The law school has been understanding of the situation and very supportive of me as a dean," he said.

Hicks said the situation has caused some anxiety, but there are also positive aspects.

"There have been a lot of peaks and valleys of emotion in the dean search," he said, "but on the plus side, this provides an opportunity for a group of faculty and students to share in a very important process."